

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS
Washington 25, D.C.

May 14, 1947

Dear General Vandenberg:

Following conferences with officials of the Department of State and other interested groups we have decided to begin a project within the Library designed to assemble information on significant current research in the social sciences, conducted by government units, national organizations, and scholars in the colleges and universities of the United States. I have asked Dr. Frederick H. Wagnan, Assistant Director of the Reference Department, to start setting up the necessary machinery for the survey.

As we conceive it, the project will eventually have considerable value to the scholarly world, to say nothing of affording the Library an important resource for answering many of its reference inquiries. But primarily it is designed to offer a means by which your department and other key units of government can locate sources of information not ordinarily discoverable through existing channels. With this in mind we plan to begin the survey by taking as a starting point those aspects of the social sciences which relate to the shaping of our foreign policy. This limitation of approach, I should add, is also conditioned by the fact that our budget will not allow us to devote much manpower to the project at the present time.

The Library is also prepared to receive and attempt to answer confidential inquiries for a limited number of Departments as to research being performed on subjects in which the Departments may not wish their interest to be generally known. Similarly, by virtue of its position in the world of scholarship, it can undertake to assist in the discovery of capable scholars for research projects which these Departments may wish to carry on or to encourage.

It is planned to maintain a separate and confidential file of data concerning the research projects deemed confidential by the agencies sponsoring them. Only a very limited number of trustworthy employees would have access to this file.

Necessarily, any activities on our part which might bear on finding scholars who might be available for confidential research on behalf of an agency would be most circumspect.

Lt. Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg

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To get the undertaking under way and to enlist public support we feel that a general announcement is advisable. I enclose a draft of a proposed press release, which of course does not go into certain of the details of the survey. I should like to have your comments both on the specific areas you feel we should stress initially in the survey and on the wording of the press release. Perhaps a conference will be called later to discuss the development of the program.

I should appreciate hearing from you in your early convenience.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Luther H. Evans

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Librarian of Congress

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(Enclosure w/d)